



# Panel 11 - Formulating a High-Quality, Hi-Impact Defense Acquisition Research Program

---

**Fred Thompson**, Goudy Professor of Public Management and Policy, Atkinson Graduate School of Management *and* Director, Willamette Center for Governance and Public Policy Research, Willamette University

<b>Report Documentation Page</b>			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
<p>Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</p>					
1. REPORT DATE <b>MAY 2008</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED			
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> <b>Formulating a High-Quality, Hi-Impact Defense Acquisition Research Program</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> <b>Willamette University,Atkinson Graduate School of Management ,900 State Street,Salem,OR,97301</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.</b>					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> <b>The original document contains color images.</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> <b>16</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			



# Where are the opportunities for learning, scholarly collaboration, and practical application?

---

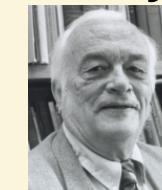
*Academic platforms?*



# Mechanism design

Focuses on information costs, design elements – authority (decision/property rights), responsibility (targets), accounts (rules for measuring performance in terms of targets), and payoffs (specified algorithms for allocating payoffs contingent upon measured performance) – and their complementarity

Big names: *Leo Hurwicz Bill Vickery*



Successful spin-off from acquisition research

Academic interest: *High* Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *Low*



# Privatization/Make-buy/ economics of organization

Armory system, depot maintenance,  
Hillmann, Henning and Gathmann, Christina, "From  
Privateering to Navy: How Sea Power Became a  
Public Good" (March 2008). Available at SSRN:  
<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1112111>

Academic interest: *Moderate*  
Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *High*



# Industrial organization

We know competition works. We don't really know why. Which mechanisms are activated by competition and which are suppressed by its absence?

Collaboration and cooperation also work. So?

What about the DoD's market power? Is that all good?

Academic interest: *High, but the translation problem is severe*

Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *Moderate*



# Capital budgeting/ valuation

*Ex ante* project assessment, cost estimation

*Ex post* project assessment, cost measurement

**Academic interest: Low**

**Utility for Acquisition Professionals: High**

***The language barrier is very high (the same conclusion probably applies to risk management, since it is basically the same field)***



# Project management

Cost, control, value-added models

Academic interest: *Moderate*

Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *High*



# Supply-chain, value-chain management

Consumer driven, demand-pull models, life-cycle focus, relational systems, network analysis

Academic interest: *Moderate to high*

Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *High*



# Innovation/knowledge management

Academic interest: *High*

Utility for Acquisition Professionals: *High*



# What have I missed?



← [Jump to first page](#) →



# Where are the opportunities for learning, scholarly collaboration, and practical application?

---

*Practitioner defined problems?* That is probably the best place to start



# Why that is easier said than done

---

It is very hard to get you guys to describe your problems in tractable manner.



# My research

- How should human agents use their minds to contrive actions aimed at converting existing conditions into preferred conditions?
- How should communities of researchers and educators assist practitioners in doing so?



# The design perspective



- The design perspective poses what-to-do questions, such as
  - How to organize?
  - How to innovate?
  - How to produce efficiently?
  - How to identify and mitigate risks?
- The design school also provides answers in the form of “practice theories”



# How, Indeed?

- *Investigate* cases whose performance characteristics are outstanding
- *Assume* that performance is attributable to social processes in which practice features play a contingent and instrumental role
- *Attribute* a practice's performance to the activation or suppression of social mechanisms



## How can real-world actors utilize such research?

- Contrive features that activate the same sorts of constructive mechanisms in the target situation as have worked elsewhere
- Contrive process design features that –in combination with actor participation and operating context – suppress those mechanisms whose effects would undermine a practice's performance